

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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June 24, 2003

**FROM:** KEN A. MILLER, Director  
Department of Public Works - Regional Parks Division

**SUBJECT:** PROPOSED COLTON REGIONAL PARK

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Approve the concept of a new regional park in the City of Colton, along the banks of the Santa Ana River, and authorize staff to proceed with negotiations for the acquisition of available lands for the Park.
2. Authorize staff to jointly develop cooperative agreement(s) with the City of Colton, for further presentation to the Board, regarding the division of responsibilities for the development and operation of the proposed regional park.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** In 2001, the Regional Parks Division applied for and was awarded grant funding through the EPA Brownfields Program for the purpose of developing the greenway along the Santa Ana River in Colton. The Brownfields Program project site is located along the southwest bank of the Santa Ana River, on the old Cooley Ranch Landfill. The City of Colton Redevelopment Agency approached Regional Parks to discuss the EPA Brownfields Program grant awarded to the City of Colton ("City") regarding land in the same area. Further discussion ensued and the idea for developing a regional park in partnership with the City was formed.

The County's Brownfields project is in the beginning stages of development. The Wildlands Conservancy, a California non-profit public benefit corporation, has committed to providing funding towards the development of the County's Brownfields project and to the proposed regional park project.

The County has not built a new Regional Park in 23 years. This proposed facility will be located in both the Fifth Supervisorial District and in a City Council District that do not have a Regional or City Park. The proposed Colton Regional Park will be developed with the active participation of the City of Colton and is supported by the City of Colton Mayor and City Council.

The parkland currently identified is zoned by the City as open space and preserve. In keeping with that zoning, design of the proposed facility will be master planned for minimal active recreation and predominately with native landscaping. This proposed facility will not fit the traditional mold of current "regional parks" in the system in that it will not have acres of turf.

Funding for the development of the proposed Colton Regional Park has been identified under the EPA Brownfields Program, Proposition 40 River Parkway Funding, the United States Army Corp of Engineers, Proposition 40 Per Capita Funding and other competitive grant programs. No County general fund dollars are required to acquire land, master plan or construct this regional park.

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Regional Parks has been researching the issue of land ownership in the identified area and has made the following findings: 96.74 acres are owned by the San Bernardino County Flood Control District; 43.63 acres are owned by the City of Riverside; and 46 acres are privately owned. The Flood Control District has expressed a willingness to work with Regional Parks on the use of the Flood Control owned properties. The City of Riverside has agreed to further discussion regarding a long-term lease of property and The Wildlands Conservancy is pursuing the purchase of the privately held properties. These properties would then be donated to the County Regional Parks for the development of the proposed Colton Regional Park.

The process for proceeding with the development of the proposed regional park will be as follows: Under the Cooley Ranch Brownfields Project an Environmental Phase I Assessment will be completed. If necessary a Phase II Assessment will be done for the Cooley Ranch site and the acreage of the proposed facility. Community outreach will be formally initiated during this phase of the project. After this document is complete Regional Parks will move forward with master planning the facility; community outreach will be concluded during this phase. Only after the environmental assessment and master plan are complete will construction begin on the proposed Colton Regional Park.

The proposed plan for the Colton Regional Park is as follows: Of the approximate two hundred total acres, fifty acres will be used for active recreation, specifically, soccer fields. The remaining acreage will be developed as natural open space, which could include a 7- to 10-acre lake for fishing and habitat, walking trails, picnic shelters, a playground and zero-depth water playground. The County will hold title to the land and with the exception of the soccer fields, will be responsible for developing the park. The City of Colton will be responsible for the construction, operation and maintenance of the developed soccer fields.

Approval of Recommendation 1 approves the concept of Colton Regional Park and authorizes the Regional Parks Division to move forward with the Flood Control District, City of Riverside and The Wildlands Conservancy for the acquisition of available lands for the proposed park. Approval of Recommendation 2 authorizes the Regional Parks Division to negotiate agreements with the City of Colton regarding the division of responsibilities for the development and future operation of the proposed Colton Regional Park. The agreement(s) with the City of Colton and any other agreements related to land acquisition and developing/operating the regional park will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval prior to proceeding.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Fiona Luke, Deputy County Counsel) on June 8, 2003, and the County Administrative Office (Tom Forster, Administrative Analyst) on June 16, 2003. This item has also been coordinated with the City of Colton.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** There is no anticipated cost to the County from these recommendations. Cost to develop this proposed Regional Park will be financed through current and future grant funds, together with participation from the City of Colton. Future costs related to park operation and maintenance will be funded by the City and park admission fees.

**COST REVIEW SECTION:** The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the department's proposal and recommends this action based on the development, operation and maintenance of the proposed Regional Park having no net financial impact on the County General Fund and the City of Colton's willingness to be a partner with the County for this proposed park.

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S):** 5<sup>th</sup>.

**PRESENTER:** Thomas A. Potter, Chief, 387-2340.